

A Tamil Malay Manuscript.

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It is well known that Islam and the greater part of Moslem mysticism found its way to the Indonesian Archipelago not from Arabia, but from Southern India. It is, indeed, a truth so well proved, that it seems superfluous to lay stress on it, or to deal with it in detail. It may suffice to remind the reader of the undeniable fact that the very form of popular Islam, the character of its mysticism, the whole Islamic edifying and romantic literature, the form of many Arabic loanwords, the style of Muhammedan tombs and so on point to Southern India as the land of their origin.

The Tamil words which were introduced by the Dravidian Moslem merchants, who converted the partly animistic partly Hinduistic population of Sumatra and Java, are still in use. Many a Dekhan saint or divine is venerated in these islands to the present day; in short, the Muhammedanism of the Dekhan still flourishes in the Indonesian world, in spite of later orthodox influences from Mecca and Hadramaut.

The substratum of animistic ideas is always visible through the Islamic tenets in their popular form while the Hindu nomenclature of some Moslem ideas indicates the intermediate layer that preceded the Islamic period. Let us only call to mind that to designate the Moslem teacher, the Islamic fast and the Muhammedan religion old Sanskrit words (*guru*, *puwasa* and *agama*) have survived in many Indonesian languages.

All such historical evidence as is now available regarding the introduction of Islam into the Archipelago has been elucidated by various scholars in the course of their investigations. The people themselves are not aware of the link which exists between their creed and the distant Mohammedan provinces of Southern India. At best, a few Indian immigrants may have a dim consciousness of the existence of that historical connection. Thus, some thirty years ago, a member of the Indian merchant family Akuan at Samarang showed a trilingual Muhammedan manuscript to Dr. Snouck Hurgronje. "This document," the owner explained, "shows the way by which the penetration of Islam has taken place; the Persian part representing the original literary language of Islamic culture in India; the portion in a modern Indian idiom, not understood by us, being representative of the interjacent country between Hindustan and these islands, and the third portion, the wholly intelligible Malay part, the speech of Islam as it is now in this country." But that intelligent merchant certainly is an exception. In order to follow the current of Islamic civilisation we have to examine historical facts and linguistic and religious evidence. In certain cases we have to rely on a single book, tale or manuscript.

So with the subject of the present paper, a manuscript which clearly shows that the Islam of Indonesia is South Indian in its origin, and was introduced by Indian Moslems, who came from the Dekhan, especially from the Tamil country. The MS. I review, is an ancient looking folio, described in my recently published supplementary catalogue of the Malay manuscripts in the Leyden University Library sub No. 754.¹ It mentions neither the place where it was written nor the name of its original owner. Yet it speaks an eloquent language, as it is composed in two idioms, Tamil and Malay, and contains moreover passages in Persian. So here we find the three Islamic languages in question employed in one book.

This manuscript, moreover, presents an example of Tamil written in Arabic characters and used for the rendering of an Arabic text. Tamil books, it is true, printed in Arabic characters are by no means unknown—(I was shown some specimens in the library of the India Office at London in 1907), but such manuscripts so far as I know, are very rare, and this one at least is unique both in Holland and Dutch India.

I will not tax the reader's patience by an exposition of the system followed in rendering Tamil sounds by Arabic characters; it will suffice to state that a copious use has been made of the so-called emphatic letters and dental letters with dots beneath them. Moreover the transliteration does not seem to be quite consistent. The very first page is typical of the nature of the whole book, Malay being mixed with Tamil without any apparent transition. This page is taken up by a *niyyah*-formula in Malay (the formulary for the inward intention to perform the ritual prostrations, *sembahyang*), ending in an Arabic prayer, which in its turn is followed by an explanation in Tamil, all by one and the same hand, and in one continuous handwriting. So, after an Arabic prayer, at once the text continues with an explanation in Tamil,² and so on. Evidently the author or scribe wrote the three languages with equal ease and understanding.

After some introductory matter a regular text begins, viz. an Arabic treatise styled: *Izām al-fawā'id fī nizām al-'akā'id*, on the tenets of the creed, accompanied by a Tamil version with fully vocalised Arabic transcription, many diacritical signs but not a single Tamil letter; so it is all in queer-looking Arabic writing. The Arabic dogmatical treatise, by Mahmūd Ibn Muhammad Labai Kumāran begins, after the usual eulogy in honour of Allah and the Prophet, as follows: "The poor slave, who needs the intervention of the Prophet, says: this is a short treatise which deals with what

1. A MS. in folio 90 folios (180 pp.) written on European paper in a bold and clear handwriting, dated 5 Sha'ban, 1192; worm-eaten.

2. *اے کہماوی چنا ناکل* id est *inda kalimawai connanagil* = if one has recited his prayer. The original has diacritical marks.

adults should know about the right creed and pious works, and which I have compiled from books of great, renowned *imām's*, as Al-Ghazālī, Al-Nawāwī, Muhammad Ibn 'Arabī, 'Abdulkarīm Al-Jablī, Muhammad Ibn Fadlallāh, Ahmad Al-Kushāshī and others, together with a translation into the Ariwī-language for the use of whosoever does not fairly understand Arabic. I have named it: the great guides in the arranging of tenets, and divided it into an introduction, four paragraphs and a conclusion."

Now, every sentence of this dogmatical treatise is followed by its rendering into Tamil. The translation therefore is not an inter-linear one presenting the equivalents of each separate word and every suffix as is often the case in Malaised and Javanised Arabic texts, but a connected translation of complete periods, in full agreement with the syntax of the idiom used for the translation. But, it is almost superfluous to add, the language used shows an admixture of Arabic words and Persian terms such as is never found in non-Islamic Tamil writings.

The first question which presents itself is: why is the Tamil language indicated by the curious term Ariwī?¹ Evidently, it represents the Islamic name for the Tamil idiom. At first sight one might be tempted to identify it with Ariwī, the language of Arvi in the Wardha Districts. But according to the Imperial Gazetteer (XXIV, 368):—"about 86 per cent. of the population are Hindus and nearly 4 per cent. Muhammedans. The statistics of language shows that 79 per cent. of the population speak Marāthi; of the remainder 13,642 persons (in 1908) probably all Muhammedans speak Urdu, 25,710 Hindi (principally Brāhmans and Rājputs), 39,385 Gondī and 2,428 Telugu." Arvi moreover does not belong to the Tamil area, and counts too small a proportion of Moslems among its population to give its name to a language used by millions in other parts of India. But, it is known that Aruwā is one of the thirteen countries, in which the inferior type of Tamil is spoken² (un pays où l'on parle le bas tamoul), and although the language of this translation is by no means the so-called *kodun* Tamil (the rude, unpolished form), I am unable to propose a more plausible derivation than that from Aruwā with the Arabic ending ī. Perhaps a better etymology may be given by some authority in Tamil matters; it may be added that in Hindustani *arwā*, being a Dakhni word, means: "of or belonging to Malabar," which nearly indicates the Tamil-speaking country.

1. Arabic *أروفاش* but in the translation *'arabuppacai*
ariyadawanukku lecyawendi arawippacai kondu oraicceyiyappadi tagawum
korwaiceyden idai peruwaitten etc.

2. "13 Tamil-nadu (தமிழநாடுகள்) which belong to the country wherein Tamil is spoken, i.e. the *Cen-tamil-nadu*, where elegant Tamil is spoken and 12 in which the common language is spoken, as *Tenpandi, Kuttam, Aruwa, Cinam, Matadu* etc.

I proceed to quote a few sentences of the beginning of the treatise in Tamil translation: for convenience's sake I abstain from using the elaborate Tamil characters. The Arabic preamble runs:—"Praise to Allah who created the creatures in order to know Him, and ordained them to follow His commands; prayer and greetings be on His apostle Muhammad the Prophet on whom His mercy be bestowed."

The Tamil translation runs thus:

<i>ellā</i>	<i>pugalum</i>	<i>pugalciyum</i>	<i>Allah Ta'ala</i>	<i>ukku</i>
all	praise	laudation and	Allah Ta'ala	to
<i>padaippugalai</i>	<i>padaittān</i>	<i>tanai</i>	<i>ariya</i>	<i>wēndi</i>
creation (acc.)	who created	him	to know	for
<i>tanudaya</i>	<i>mārkattūdu</i>	<i>nadakkumpadi</i>	<i>parimānān</i>	
his	divine way in	to walk like	he ordained	
<i>Allah Ta'ala</i>	<i>udaya</i>	<i>salamum</i>	<i>awanudaya</i>	
Allah Ta'ala	of	peace and	his	
<i>tūdan</i>	<i>ukku</i>	<i>namudaya</i>	<i>nabiyār</i>	<i>Muhammad</i>
messenger	to	our	Prophet	Muhammad
<i>rahmattānawidam....</i>		<i>awargalci</i>	<i>kottiram</i>	<i>awar</i>
grace means		to his	tribe	his
<i>tōlanmār</i>	<i>awarudaya</i>	<i>ummatukku....</i>	<i>undāwatāgawum</i>	
comrades	his	family to	shall become.	

Certain portions which were illegible to me (a Tamil Moslem, no doubt, would be able to read them) I have left vacant. In the same manner the translation runs, ever increasing in its interpretation of the Arabic sentences, so that gradually it develops into an ample commentary, fifteen folios, till there comes an abrupt ending. The last page of these fifteen folios is not covered with writing; on the page immediately following a Malay dogmatical tract of six folios begins. Next come some Tamil pages containing different dogmatical and legal items, and some *niyyah*-formulae and wedding-formulae, the Arabic prayers being indicated either by Tamil or by Malay titles, on one page even by a Persian one. So we find here the four great Moslem languages united: the sacred Arabic for the formulae, the old literary Persian, which once was the court language in Northern India, the far spread Malay, which is both the intermediary language of all Indonesian nations of the Moslem creed, and the islamised Tamil, the commercial idiom of the Dekhan.

The text further deals with the common dogmatical and mystical or divinatory subjects, which are usually to be found in so many Indian and Indonesian religious tracts. It would be extremely tiresome to enumerate the contents of this varied manuscript in detail; it may suffice to point out the characteristic parts only. So we pass by in silence the Malay portions on dogmatics and the mystic circles (so-called *dairahs*) and on the different

spirits (*rūh*) as well as a treatise in catechism form on *islām* and *īmān*, which altogether takes up nearly one-third of the whole book. We will restrict ourselves to a summary.

After a page filled partly with Malay, partly with Tamil and for the third part with Arabic, follows a small treatise in Arabic, concerning the Prophet Muhammad; each Arabic sentence being followed by its Tamil translation and commentary. Subsequently—we omit prayers, some of them with a Tamil introduction—a Tamil enumeration of the Muhammedan months and the luck attaching to them is succeeded by prayers and invocations, and this portion in its turn by a short Malay tract of dogmatical tendency. This joins on to an enumeration, in Tamil again, of the ancient prophets and of Muhammad's wives, which is concluded by a great magical quadrat, fully and completely elucidated by means of Tamil comments, *i.e.* an elaborate and crudely worded exhortation regarding sexual matters. It is very remarkable to find a page containing a Persian portion and a Tamil one, the former being preceded by a couple of lines in Arabic characters in a language which is neither Tamil nor Persian nor Hindustani, but presumably some other Indian idiom.

Next there follows a Malay treatise dealing with nearly the same subject, *viz.* exceedingly intimate and confidential hints about coitus and allied items, and this treatise is succeeded by a Tamil portion of a divinatory kind, with a complete calendar. In order to give an idea of the transcription of Tamil in Arabic characters I mention now the numerals in both scripts. In the original diacritica marks are used Arabic characters.

1	وند	<i>ondru</i>	ஒன்று
2	ارند	<i>irandu</i>	இரண்டு
3	موند	<i>mundru</i>	மூன்று
4	نال	<i>nalū</i>	நாலு
5	انچ	<i>anju</i>	அஞ்சு
6	ار	<i>aru</i>	ஆறு
7	بيض	<i>elu</i>	ஏழு
8	يد	<i>eddu</i>	எட்டு
9	انضت	<i>onpadu</i>	ஒன்பது

Finally the last folio, which is detached, but evidently belongs to the book, concludes with a Malay verse of the ordinary kind, on a lady and her birds, with some Javanese words, by a certain

Tambi Mirah, who styles his poem Sha'ir Indra Dibawan, a name of no importance. The author pretends that the book was in the possession of an inhabitant of Batavia, but this assertion proves nothing regarding its real origin. Over the poem there is written a date, viz. A.H. 1192, 4 Sha'bān (1191 *warusham Sha'bān māsam 4 tiram*) i.e. 29 August, 1767, and its owner's name a certain Kumāran with an illegibly written name of a town ending in *puram*, certainly not Singapura. This name, if it be one, is divided into three unvocalised words, viz. نل بلشنو فرم

Having completed my summary of the manuscript I wish to offer a few remarks on the question of its origin. The former proprietor, Professor Snouck Hurgronje, purchased it in Java. But, evidently, it was previously the property of a Moslem, to whom Malay was as familiar as Tamil, and to whom Persian was not an unknown language. An individual of this type one may expect to find in Singapore, at Pulau Pinang, in the Federated Malay States, in short, anywhere in British Malaya and islands, but certainly not in the Dutch Indian Archipelago, not even in Acheen. "Habent sua fata libelli," and Malay books too may have their vicissitudes. I saw in Sumatra Malay manuscripts, which had been the property of descendants of the Sepoys, who on the cession of the Western parts of that island to the Dutch government went over from British to Dutch service. These books had been provided with interlinear comments in Javanese and in Arabic characters, so-called *p'egon*. Evidently this commentary was due to some later owner of Javanese blood. Almost any collection of manuscripts in Java comprises some books of remote origin, which one would hardly expect to meet with in this part of the world.

The manuscript which forms the subject of the present note must have been brought to Java by a native of that country. Through the agency of Dr. Snouck Hurgronje, late Adviser to the Netherlands-Indian government and now Professor of Arabic at the Leyden University, it has found its way to the University Library. As regards the original owner, we can only conjecture that he was a Tamil Moslem, who had dwelt long enough in Malaya to know Malay. But we cannot fancy the existence of a Tamil who lives long enough in a Malay country to master the Malay language so that it becomes equally easy for him as his own original idiom. It is obvious therefore that not he but a son of his, born in Malaya from a Malay mother, wrote this book. From his father he got his familiarity with Tamil, from his mother his knowledge of Malay, from both his Islamic creed. Such a man would be a typical representative of the immigrants who introduced Islam into the Archipelago.

These settlers, Dravidians or Guzeratis, married native women in the Peninsula and in the islands, and their sons, so-called *pěranakan*, were familiar with the languages both of their father and of their mother. The former idiom they gradually forgot so that finally their only language was Malay. Their sons, in their turn, knew neither Tamil nor Persian, but understood and talked nothing but Malay.

This worm-eaten, slovenly written, manuscript, although neither very ancient nor specially important is a curious historical document belonging to the period when Islam was introduced from the *něgěri di-atas angin* (Persia and Hindustan) into the *něgěri di-bawah angin* (Malaya, Sumatra, Java and the islands further on to the East). It is a document bearing evidence of the great movement that swept away Hindu culture in the Indonesian world. It points to the Straits as the link between Southern India and the Archipelago. Consequently it seemed particularly fitting that an account of this manuscript should appear in the *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*.

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